

Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterers of sharp mental faculty. However, as before, even though attainers-by-seeing and followers of Dharma have the same meaning, the scriptures apply the term 'followers of Dharma' to *approachers* to the result of stream-enterer of sharp mental faculty and the term 'attainers-by-seeing' to *abiders* in the result of stream-enterer of sharp mental faculty.

From the perspective of exertion, *abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators* can be further categorized into:

- i. Simple abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators
- ii. Special abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators

i. Simple abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators

Simple abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators (*spang bya rim gyis pa'i rgyun zhugs 'bras gnas tsam po ba*) are Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterers who do not abide on an uninterrupted path that mainly strives to attain the next result of once-returner.

Here, an uninterrupted path that mainly strives to attain the next result of once returner refers to an uninterrupted path, in the continuum of a Gradual-Eliminator that temporarily or irrevocably eliminates any of the first six types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. In other words, it refers either to (1) a mundane uninterrupted path (of the preparatory stage of the first concentration) which temporarily eliminates any of the first six types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, or to (2) any of the first five supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation which irrevocably eliminate any of the first six types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm.

An example of a simple abider in the result of stream-enterer who is a Gradual-Eliminator is a Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterer who abides on the mundane path of release (of the preparatory stage of the first concentration) that attains the temporary cessation of the first type of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm. Such a path of release does not strive to attain the result of once-returner, for it merely rests in the state of attainment of the temporary *cessation* of that first type of mundane innate Desire Realm afflictions.

ii. Special abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators

Special abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators (*spang bya rim gyis pa'i rgyun zhugs 'bras gnas khyad par can*) are Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterers who abide on an uninterrupted path that mainly strives to attain the result of once-returner.

As mentioned above, an uninterrupted path that strives to attain the result of once-returner refers to either (1) a mundane uninterrupted path (of the preparatory stage of the first concentration) which temporarily eliminates any of the first six mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, or to (2) any of the first five supramundane uninterrupted paths of the path of meditation that irrevocably eliminate any of the first six types of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm.

An example of a special abider in the result of stream-enterer who is a Gradual-Eliminator is a Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterer who abides on the mundane uninterrupted path (of the preparatory stage of the first concentration) that temporarily eliminates the first type of mundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm.

Please note that Gradual-Eliminator stream-enterers who abide on an uninterrupted path that temporarily or irrevocably eliminates any of the first six types of mundane innate afflictions are also *approachers to the result of once-returner who are Gradual-Eliminators* (which are explained below). In fact, special abiders in the result of stream-enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators and *approachers to the result of once-returner who are Gradual-Eliminators* are equivalent.

From the perspective of taking rebirth, *abiders in the result of stream enterer who are Gradual-Eliminators* can also be categorized into:

- i. Stream-enterer born into samsaric existence seven times
- ii. Stream-enterer born from type to type

i. Stream-enterers born into samsaric existence seven times

Stream-enterers born into samsaric existence seven times (*rgyun zhugs srid pa lan bdun pa ba*) are stream-enterers (1) who newly attained the result of stream-enterer in this life, (2) who have not yet

attained the irrevocable cessation of the first type of supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, and (3) who may take a maximum of fourteen rebirths within cyclic existence. These fourteen rebirths constitute seven rebirths as humans and seven rebirths as celestial beings of the Desire Realm.

Even though *stream-enterers born into samsaric existence seven times* may take a maximum of fourteen rebirths, since these rebirths consist of seven rebirths as humans and seven rebirths as celestial beings of the Desire Realm, they are called 'stream enterers born into samsaric existence seven times', for rebirth as human and rebirth as celestial being of the Desire Realm are of a similar type. They are of a similar type because they both pertain to the Desire Realm. This can be compared to a type of tree that is called 'seven-lobe tree' because, even though the entire tree has more than seven lobes (since it has hundreds of leaves), each of its leaves has only seven lobes.

Stream-enterers born into samsaric existence seven times are of two types:

- (I) Stream-enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times
- (II) Stream-enterers not definitely born into samsaric existence seven times

(I) *Stream-enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times*

Stream enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times (*nges pa'i rgyun zhugs srid pa lan bdun pa ba*) are stream enterers (1) who newly attained the result of stream-enterer in this life, (2) who have not yet attained the irrevocable cessation of the first type of supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, and (3) who will *definitely* take fourteen rebirths in the Desire Realm, seven of those as humans and seven of those as celestial beings of the Desire Realm (having accumulated the propelling karma of these rebirths before reaching the path of seeing). During the fourteenth rebirth they will attain the result of foe-destroyer.

Regarding the results of once-returner and non-returner, since in general, once-returners (as explained below) are characterized by returning, i.e. taking rebirth in the Desire Realm only once, *stream-enterers definitely born into samsaric existence* attain the result of once-returner at the latest during the thirteenth rebirth. Non-returners, on the other hand, are characterized by not returning, i.e. by not being reborn in the Desire Realm again. Therefore, during their fourteenth rebirth, *stream-enterers definitely born into samsaric existence* achieve the result of non-returner and thereafter the result of foe-destroyer.

Furthermore, *stream-enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times* are Hinayana Aryas of the weakest mental faculty, for there are no Hinayana Aryas who take longer to attain self-liberation. In other words, there are no Hinayana practitioners who, once they reach the path of seeing, are reborn in cyclic existence *more* than fourteen times before they are able to irrevocably eliminate the subtlest afflictive obstructions and become foe-destroyers.

Stream enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times can be further categorized into:

- a) Stream enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times who [in their final rebirth] have the physical basis of a celestial being of the Desire Realm.
- b) Stream enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times who [in their final rebirth] have the physical basis of a human being

a) *Stream enterers definitely born into samsaric existence seven times who [in their final rebirth] have the physical basis of a celestial being*

They are stream-enterers (1) who newly attained the result of stream-enterer in this life, (2) who have not yet attained the irrevocable cessation of the first type of supramundane innate afflictions of the Desire Realm, (3) who will take fourteen rebirths in the Desire Realm, and (4) who will become foe-destroyers during the last of those fourteen rebirths as celestial beings of the Desire Realm.

Hence, in this life these stream-enterers are human beings and for the subsequent fourteen rebirths they will alternate between rebirths as celestial beings of the Desire Realm and as humans. This means they will take seven pairs of rebirths of a similar type: human/celestial being, human/celestial being, and so forth.

In their last life they will be celestial beings of the Desire Realm and therefore attain the result of foe-destroyer with the physical basis of a celestial being of the Desire Realm.

